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Ruth Hoberman
Eastern Illinois University

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English 3903
 Spring 2011
 e-mail: rhoberman@eiu.edu
 Office hours: MW 2-3; Tu 10-11

Ruth Hoberman
 Coleman 3755
 Phone: 581-6981

Texts:

Margaret Drabble, *The Millstone* (1965)
 Caryl Churchill, *Cloud Nine* (1979)
 Angela Carter, *The Bloody Chamber* (1979)
 Fay Weldon, *The Life and Loves of a She-Devil* (1983)
 Jeanette Winterson, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (1985)
 Byatt, *Matisse Stories* (hand-out, 1993)
 Zadie Smith, *White Teeth* (2000)
 Sarah Waters, *The Little Stranger* (2009)
 Carol Ann Duffy, *Selected Poems* (2009)
 The F-Word

Goals: We'll be reading novels, short stories, plays, poetry, songs, and blogs by twentieth- and twenty-first-century British women writers, looking at how these works participate in an ongoing conversation about gender. Among other things, we will:

- think analytically about the role of gender in literary texts by women, exploring how these books reinforce or challenge our assumptions about what it means to be a "woman" or "man."
- discuss historical and cultural forces shaping the lives of men and women during the late twentieth and early twenty-first century and analyze how the assigned works respond to them.
- gain an understanding of contemporary British women writers in particular: their particular concerns and techniques, and their responses to each other as they attempt to "think back through their mothers," in Virginia Woolf's words, and establish a female literary tradition.
- gain a better understanding of contemporary feminism ("the advocacy of women's rights on the grounds of sexual equality"--OED) as it responds to earlier feminist movements and as it intersects with British popular culture: toward this end we'll talk about how British popular music, products, advertisements, etc. address gender.

These goals conform with Women's Studies program learning objectives:

- * Students will be able to articulate an awareness of cultural contexts in which women have lived and worked;
- * Students will be able to demonstrate an ability to speak knowledgeably about the relationship of women to the academic discipline addressed in this course.

Requirements:

Lots of class participation and two 10-minute presentations (20)

Midterm and final (10/20)

Two formal essays (3-4 pp.); 4-6 pp.) (10/20)

WebCT blog in response to the reading (20)

Essay grades will be based on Standards for Grading Themes at EIU. I plan to use number rather than letter grades; this will convert into your final grade as follows: 91-100=A; 81-90=B; 70-80=C. 65-69=D. Because I grade on a 100-point scale, missing assignments affect the grade tremendously.

Blog: At least once/week, log on to WebCT, click on the Discussions icon, and post your thoughts on:

1. Someone else's response to the assigned reading for the class (unless you're the first to post for that week).

2. The assigned reading. Make sure you include a direct quotation in the course of your response (providing page number in parentheses). focus on a single issue throughout your response, and provide at least a solid paragraph of thoughtful discussion.
3. How this reading relates to earlier readings and/or your own observations/experiences/reading/other classes.

NOTE: To get full credit, focus your response on reading due for the class before which you post it, and make sure you are in class to discuss your comments. The point of the responses is to stimulate your thinking about the assigned reading, to give you practice in analyzing it on your own, and to facilitate your involvement in class discussion. But I also suggest you revisit these postings and respond after class as well, particularly if your thinking on the text has changed or evolved in any way.

Policies: English Department statement on plagiarism:

Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism--"The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author and representation of them as one's original work" (Random House Dictionary of the English Language) --has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of NC for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office. Respect for the work of others should encompass all formats, including print, electronic, and oral sources.

Late work: Plan to hand in papers on time. If you're having problems, let me know. **Papers a week or more late will not be accepted at all.**

Attendance and classroom etiquette: Attendance at every class is expected. Note that a significant portion of the grade is based on class participation and WebCT postings, which require keeping up with the reading and (obviously) being in class. **Excessive absences will result in a grade of 0 for the in-class portion of your grade.** If you need to miss class or leave early for some reason, please let me know ahead of time. Needless to say, please keep cell phones off.

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

Syllabus (tentative)

I. First Wave and the Beginnings of Second Wave Feminism

MJanuary 10: introduction to course: First wave feminism and Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*.

W12: Read Woolf, Chapters 5-6 *A Room of One's Own*. On-line at:

<http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/w/woolf/virginia/w91r/> or find through WebCT weblink. Please print out a few pp. that strike you as particularly interesting and bring to class.

Fri14: Drabble, *The Millstone* (1965)

M17: No class.

W19: Drabble. Post to WebCT #1, W or F.

F 21: Drabble. Greer, *The Female Eunuch* (excerpts, 1971)

II. 1970s-1980s: The Second Wave

M24: Churchill, *Cloud Nine* (1979). Post to WebCT #2, M, W, or F

W26: Churchill.

F28: Carter, "The Bloody Chamber" in *The Bloody Chamber* (1979)

M31: Carter. Post to WebCT #3, M, W, or F
WFeb2: Carter
FFeb 4: Weldon, *Life and Loves of a She-Devil* (1983)

M7: Weldon. Post to WebCT #4, M, or W
W9: Weldon.

F11: No class

M14: Winterson, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (1985). WebCT #5 due M, W, or F
W16: Winterson
F18: Winterson

M21: Winterson
W23: Essay #1 due. Presentation #1: Tell the class about your chosen blog:
<http://www.thefword.org.uk/>
<http://finallyfeminism101.wordpress.com/>
<http://pennyred.blogspot.com/>
<http://www.vaginadentatablog.net/>
<http://www.pinkstinks.co.uk/>
<http://feministcarnival.blogspot.com/>
F25: Byatt, hand-out, from *Matisse Stories* (1993)

M 28: Byatt
WMarch2: Midterm

III. Third Wave/Post-Feminism?
F4: Smith, *White Teeth* (2000)

M7: Smith
W9: Smith
F11: Smith

M14-19: spring break

M21: Smith
W23: Smith
F25: *Bend It like Beckham* (2002)

M28: *Bend It like Beckham*
W30: *Bend It like Beckham*. Poems by Ruth Padel, Denise Riley et al. (hand-out).
FAp 1: Poems (cont). Hand in 1-page proposal for essay #2.

M4: Waters, *The Little Stranger* (2009)
W6: Waters
F8: Waters

M11: Waters

W13: Waters
Fr 15: Waters.

M18: Presentations. Essay #2 due.
W20: Presentations
F22: Duffy, *Selected Poems* (2009).

M 25: Duffy
W27: Duffy
F29: review. Hand in final version essay #2.

There will be a cumulative final exam during exam week.

An incomplete list of contemporary British women singer/songwriter/performers of interest to feminists:
Spice Girls, Kate Nash, Florence and the Machine, Adele, Duffy, Amy Winehouse, Lily Allen, MIA,
Corinne Bailey Rae (please tell me about names I should add).

Women's Movement in England: to 1928

First Wave Feminism

- 1792: Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* "Gentleness, docility, and a spaniel-like affection are, on this ground, consistently recommended as the cardinal virtues. She was created to be the toy of man, his rattle, and it must jingle in his ears, whenever, dismissing reason, he chooses to be amused."
- 1851, 1870: Bills presented for women's suffrage in House of Lords, House of Commons
- 1864: Contagious Diseases Acts
- 1869: John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women*
- 1869: Girton College, first university for women, established at Cambridge by Barbara Bodichon and Emily Davies
- 1879: Lady Margaret Hall and Somerville established at Oxford University; women not awarded degrees until 1920.
- 1880: Newnham College established by Cambridge U, but women could not take degrees in title until 1921 and not fully until 1947
- 1882: Married Women's Property Act (after effort instigated by Barbara Leigh-Smith Bodichon's *A Brief Summary in Plain Language of the Most Important Laws Concerning Women* [1854])
- 1886: Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act (Josephine Butler)
- 1889: first London production of Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*
- 1890s: emergence of the "New Woman" in fiction such as Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, Sarah Grand's *The Heavenly Twins*, Ella Hepworth Dixon's *A Modern Woman*, George Gissing's *The Odd Women*
- 1897: National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (Millicent Garrett Fawcett, president)
- 1903: Women's Social and Political Union founded by Emmeline Pankhurst and daughters Sylvia and Christabel with motto "Deeds not words."
- 1908: WSPU-led attempt to enter Houses of Parliament; David Eder, *The Endowment of Motherhood*.
- 1911, Olive Schreiner, *Women and Labour* opposes unequal pay, "sex parasitism." Supports right of women to work and enter public sphere. Because they know the "history of human flesh," they will end war. "We take all labour for our province!"
- 1913 Christabel Pankhurst, *The Great Scourge and How to End It*
- 1914: suspension of suffrage movement to support war effort: More than 1 million women working during war; more than 750,000 in munitions. Drove buses, nursed, munitions factories, men. Jessie Pope: "No longer caged and penned up/They're out to keep their end up."
- 1918: women over 30 got vote. 1928 women get vote on same terms as men.
- 1920 women get degrees at Oxford; 1921 Cambridge (1947 get full membership; 1956 women at Cambridge for first time take exams in same room as men)
- 1928: Ray Strachey, *The Cause*
- 1929 Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

Second Wave Feminism

1949 Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*
1963 Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*
1966 Founding of NOW, 1966
1968 First equal pay strike in Britain (Ford sewing machinists); demonstration at Miss America pageant
1970: Disruption of Miss World contest, London; Germaine Greer, *The Female Eunuch*; Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics*
1972: Sherry Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture"
1974: First British National Lesbian Conference;
1975: British National Abortion Campaign founded; Virago launched; Helene Cixous, "Laugh of the Medusa." Wages for Housework demonstrations
1976: Britain's first Rape Crisis Centre.
1977: Reclaim the Night first demonstrations; National Women's Conference, Houston. Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is not One*
1978: Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering*
1979: Carol Gilligan, "Woman's Place in Man's Life Cycle"
1980: Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence"; British Women Against Violence Against Women founded; Judy Chicago's The Dinner Party opens in San Francisco
1982: 30,000 women encircle Green Common Camp; Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*

--drawn from Maggie Humm, ed. *Feminisms: A Reader* (N.Y. Harvester, 1992)